



CALPEEK

CALIFORNIA POLITICAL WEEK

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PRIMARY PREVIEW

Editor's note: This is the issue where we wrap up the races for Statewide, Legislative, House, initiative and local primary contests. And just a reminder: *those who use a crystal ball sometimes eat glass...*

Political Overview & Trends

◆ **Another Low Turnout?** - The best quote from a political consultant is this: "Voters are very contented and would just as soon cancel the primary." Sources expect a turnout of 40-45%. SOS Bill Jones(R) predicts a 42% turnout, which is much better than the 35.1% turnout in the '94 primary. Jones also says there was a record number of requests for *absentee ballots*...

◆ **The Blanket Primary** - This will be the first time that voters can cast ballot for whichever candidate they want, regardless of party. There are more questions than answers, but the big question is this: what will true independents do? It's *wait and see* time...

◆ **Incumbent Protection** - Low voter turnout tends to help incumbents. Trend: sources say voters seem to be looking for experienced candidates at the Statewide level vs. untested newcomers with *deep pockets*...

● **Lousy TV Coverage** - When it comes to covering campaigns & elections, local tv news is MIA. No new trend here, but what is troubling is that in some markets tv stations won't even sell ad time to down-ballot candidates. Filling the news & info void is cable TV, whether it's CNN or Fox Cable News on the national level or Century Communications in the L.A. and Orange Co. markets. Spanish language tv seems to be stepping up to the plate too. Ditto: public tv and radio stations in Calif...

◆ **Year of the Latino Voter** - According to the Latino Issues Forum, there are now 2.3 million registered and eligible Latinos who can vote June 2nd. With a number of Statewide Latino candidates on the ballot, plus Prop. 227, sources think they could provide "The Margin of Victory," which happens to be the title of a new report documenting Latino voting trends. FYI: 65% of Latino voters are Demos vs. 19% GOP...

Statewide Constitutional Offices

☒ **Governor** - It's a given that AG Dan Lungren will be the GOP nominee for governor. And at this point, one has to believe that Lt. Gov. Gray Davis is now the favorite to win the Demo nomination. The latest *L.A. Times* survey puts Davis ahead of this two *deep pocketed* rivals, U.S. Rep. Jane Harman and businessman Al Checchi --- Davis 28%, Harman 16% and Checchi 10%. The new Field Poll shows Lungren at 30%; Davis at 27%; Harman at 14%; and Checchi at 13%. Many sources believe it's time to *zip the bag* on both the Harman & Checchi campaigns. Checchi, the only candidate with no government experience, also was the only candidate with a vision. His quote from the first debate that *the enemy of the future is complacency* was right to the point. But voters didn't like his negative tv campaign, so it doesn't do any good to wonder *what if*, because we'll never know...

☒ **Lt. Governor** - No problem figuring out the winner on the Demo side: former Assembly Speaker Cruz Bustamante defeats Tony Miller. Bustamante's tv spot is one of the best we've seen. The GOP primary is tougher to figure. GOP businesswoman Noel Irwin-Hentschel is on tv & radio statewide and her spots are good. State Sen. Tim Leslie is on most all the GOP slates and also has tv/radio, but his buy isn't as large as

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I-H's. State Sen. Richard Mountjoy, who is leading Leslie & I-H in the current *L.A. Times* poll (Mountjoy 9%, Leslie 6% and I-H 5% and 65% of GOP voters un-decided), doesn't have much except for a CRA slate to conservatives. But Mountjoy is the *key* because he *takes votes away* from Leslie. Prediction: leans toward Irwin-Hentschel, but Leslie still has a chance...

☒ **Attorney General** - The big question is whether a last minute influx of Indian tribal gaming money to State Sen. Charles Calderon(D) and Deputy AG Dave Stirling(R) will make a difference in this race? Insiders say Sen. Bill Lockyer defeats both Calderon and former U.S. Rep. Lynn Schenk on the Demo side, despite the fact that Schenk is attacking Lockyer on tv with hits about tobacco & assault weapons. Too little and too late. Sources say Lockyer's tracking polls puts him in the 30-percent range, with both Calderon & Schenk far behind. On the GOP side, Stirling has received \$259,000 from six Indian tribes and is now on equal fundraising footing with GOP rival, O.C. DA Mike Capizzi. Both are on tv, but Capizzi is winning the newspaper endorsement wars. One source thinks Stirling will win the GOP vote north of the *Tehachipi's* by a 3-to-1 margin and thus win the race. Others think the GOP contest is still a *toss up*. The new *L.A. Times* poll shows Lockyer 27%, Calderon 4%, Schenk 3%, Stirling 10%, Capizzi 5% and 51% are undecided...

☒ **Treasurer** - Sacto Demo businessman Phil Angelides has almost a free ride in the primary, but on the Republican side the warfare between Assemblymen Jan Goldsmith and Curt Pringle has not stopped. The new *L.A. Times* poll of likely voters shows Angelides with 27%, Goldsmith at 15% and Pringle with 9%. Among GOP likely voters, Goldsmith holds a 26% vs. 13% lead. Pringle may have more tv and slates, but Goldsmith has an edge in the newspaper endorsement wars. Despite the current numbers, some **Calpeek** sources think it leans toward Pringle because 56% of GOP voters remain undecided...

☒ **Controller & SOS** - All the action will take place in the fall...

☒ **Insurance Commissioner** - Incumbent GOP Insurance Comm. Chuck Quackenbush gets 41% of likely voters in this primary, according to the new *L.A. Times* poll. Demo insurance agent Hal Brown is at

12%, while Demo Assemblywoman Diane Martinez gets 18%. Brown is on most all Demo slates and because of this, sources think Brown will emerge as the primary winner to face Quackenbush in November...

☒ **Supt. of Public Instruction** - Insiders think incumbent Delaine Eastin is in trouble. In the latest *L.A. Times* survey, she's at 31% vs. Gloria Matta Tuchman, who has 16%. Eastin is winning the newspaper endorsement wars. There's a huge 52% undecided...

A Final Look at Initiatives

● **Prop. 226** - The trend for this initiative requiring a member's OK before union dues are used for political purposes is *downward*. The current *L.A. Times* poll of likely voters shows YES at 51% vs. NO at 37%. In the April *L.A. Times* poll the YES was 66% vs. 26% NO. The NO side has been bombarding the tv airwaves with negative ads. And the current crop of NO spots are *much more focused* than the earlier ads. The NO side's internal polling also shows a *downward trend*, according to our sources. Independent polling confirms this. Newspaper endorsements are split, with conservative publications supporting 226...

● **Prop. 227** - This measure to adopt the Unz Plan and do away with traditional bilingual education in Calif. schools continues to trend toward *approval*. The new *L.A. Times* survey among likely voters shows 63% in favor vs. 23% opposed. The NO side got a break when Jerry Perenchio, chair of Univision Communications, contributed \$1.5 million to the NO side, which is using the money in a last minute tv buy. Despite the late infusion of big bucks, our sources say 227 will still pass, although the margin will drop to the mid-to-low 50% range...

● **Prop. 223** - The *95/5 Initiative* is trending *downward* according to the latest *L.A. Times* survey. The current polls shows YES at 40% vs. 38% NO. But a month ago the YES side stood at 55%. The NO side should **kill** the YES side north of the Tehachipi Mts. In the newspaper editorial wars, the NO side has won most every major endorsement...

● **Prop. 224** - Sorry, but there's no polling data that's being made public by either side, but it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that NO on 224, with a

large warchest, is bashing away on radio, tv and with direct mail. The YES side has a fairly good radio buy and is on a handful of slates. The NO on 224 campaign has *won* the newspaper endorsement wars. NO on 224 should win with at least 52% or more. The ballot title about competitive bidding keeps YES on 224 close...

U.S. Senate & U.S. House Races

☒ **U.S. Senate** - A May 23rd *L.A. Times* story about Darrell Issa's business practices during the early 1980s has turned the GOP primary into the closest battle this June 2nd. The story by Eric Lichtblau was one of the *most negative* stories about a candidate in this campaign cycle. For many weeks Issa has led his rival, CA Treasurer Matt Fong, but the race has tightened because Issa's campaign is *erratic*. In the latest *L.A. Times* survey of likely voters (taken prior to 5/23), U.S. Sen. Barbara Boxer(D) leads with 40%, followed by Issa at 22% and Fong at 20%. Fong sources say their polls taken *afterwards* show Issa dropping into 3rd place. Issa's campaign is furiously spinning back, faxing out a memo saying, *Los Angeles Times Echoes False Charges*. And Issa has 2 new tv spots, both stressing his conservative support. Fong wants to keep Lichtblau's story alive and at a May 26th news conference was vague about endorsing Issa should he win. The bottomline: this primary is *too close to call*...

☒ **3rd CD** - The GOP primary battle in this CD now represented by retiring Demo U.S. Rep. Vic Fazio of Sacto is one of the more costly Republican House primaries in this election cycle, with *deep pocketed* Sacto businessman Doug Ose(R) spending more than \$1 million to bash his main rival, conservative GOP Assemblywoman Barbara Alby. Ose has hit Alby on radio, tv and in the mail. Alby may have better name ID, but she doesn't have the resources to hammer back. Some sources pick Ose, but others think it's too close. And does Sacto businessman Charlie Schaupp(R) cut into Ose's vote -- thus tipping the election to Alby???

☒ **34th CD** - The Demo primary battle for this open seat now held by retiring U.S. Rep. Esteban Torres(D) is *much closer* than many may think. Demo Assemblywoman Grace Napolitano was the early favorite over Jamie Casso, Torres' son-in-law and COS. The only polling (by Fairbank, Maslin for Napolitano) in mid May showed 23% for Napolitano, 14% for Casso,

13% for GOPer Ed Perez and 5% for AIP candidate Walter Scott, with a large 45% undecided. Casso has been mailing heavily. *Too close to call*...

☒ **36th CD** - The only polling we've seen (*The Polling Report*, 5/25) is a survey for GOPer Susan Brooks by The Polling Co., May 13, 400 voters. In the battle for this open seat now held by retiring U.S. Rep. Jane Harman(D), Brooks is at 20%, Assemblyman Steve Kuykendall(R) is at 12% and L.A. Councilman Rudy Svornich(R) is at 9%. Demo Janice Hahn is at 13% and the undecided is at 46%. Opinions are totally split as to which GOPer wins, but one thing is certain: Brooks is well funded, including a large IE by the *term limits* crowd...

☒ **46th CD** - Can *B-1 Bob* - aka former Congressman Bob Dornan(R) make a comeback? Demo U.S. Rep. Loretta Sanchez and her supporters sure hope so, but to hear GOP attorney Lisa Hughes - you'd think Dornan was *political toast*. Only problem is that Hughes isn't the only GOPer in this race. There's also Judge James Gray, who has raised enough money to be credible. The only polling seems to show Dornan in a very slight lead over Hughes and Gray, with both of them close to one another, although Gray is the *Rodney Dangerfield* in this primary - he doesn't get much respect. The poll was taken before the mail started to flow. Our sources are divided: some think Dornan will take the primary because the anti-Dornan GOP vote is split, while others think Hughes just slips in. FYI: when Dornan walked out of a recent debate, Hughes called Dornan a "coward."...

Legislative Contests

☒ **Keep Your Eyes on This New PAC** - It's called *Conservative Attorneys for Civil Justice*(CACJ). It's a GOP trial lawyers group and they intend to become key players in *Campaign '98*. The PAC, which may be one of the larger GOP-oriented groups, is backing 11 GOP Assembly candidates in the primary. They include Art Brandwood(2nd AD); David Reade(3rd AD); Dr. Alan Nakanishi(10th AD); Mike Briggs(29th AD); Tony Strickland(37th AD); Peter Repovich(43rd AD); Mike Radlovic(60th AD); Bob De Mallie(61st AD); Jim Lacy(73rd AD); Duane Admire(76th AD) and Myke Shelby(78th AD). Most of the 11 are in high profile races...

☒ **20th SD** - In this open seat battle between former Demo Assembly Leader Richard Katz and L.A. Councilman Richard Alarcon, the race is tightening up because Alarcon is going **negative**. Katz is responding and should win...

☒ **6th SD** - The GOP battle between Chris Quackenbush and businessman Mike McCollum is rated as a *toss up*. Quackenbush has the money, but McCollum is hitting her as an *outsider* who hasn't lived in the district very long. In addition, he's got grassroots, conservative support. The winner here will face Demo Assemblywoman Deborah Ortiz...

☒ **47th AD** - One of the hottest Demo Assembly primaries matches Herb Wesson, chief deputy to L.A. Co. Sup. Yvonne Burke, against Joey Hill Jr., COS to Assemblyman Kevin Murray, who is trying to move up to the State Senate. A Fairbank, Maslin survey for Wesson (May 18/19, 345 likely voters), shows Wesson with **25%**, Hill at **12%** and Marcia Cohen at **7%**. There is still a very large undecided vote. Most sources think Wesson is a favorite because he has better name ID (**45%** vs. **28%** for Hill) and a huge warchest. Still, there are some who think Hill might pull this one out...

Sheriffs & Other Local Races

◆ **San Jose Mayor's Race** - This contest to replace Mayor Susan Hammer might be closer than originally predicted. It pits former Santa Clara Co. Sup. Ron Gonzales against San Jose Councilwoman Pat Dando, with Kathy Chavez Napoli providing the real excitement. A new *San Jose Mercury News* survey released May 27th shows Gonzales at **25%**, Dando at **15%**, Napoli at **5%**, others at **7%** and undecided at a huge **48%**. When the race first started, Gonzales supporters were hoping he's win without a runoff. That doesn't seem likely now...

◆ **Oakland Mayor's Race** - The only question here is whether former CA Gov. Jerry Brown goes over 50% in the primary. If he does, it's all over. Sources put the odds of Brown winning without a runoff at **70%**. If he is held below 50%, his likely opponent will be one of three rivals: Alameda Co. Sup. Mary King; Oakland Councilman Ignacio de la Fuente; or perhaps NAACP official Shannon Reeves, who happens to be the only GOPer in this contest...

◆ **L.A. Co. Sheriff's Race** - Incumbent Sherman Block is in the fight of his political life and the odds are he'll be forced into a November runoff. The question is with whom? At the beginning of the campaign, Sheriff's Chief Lee Baca seemed like the guy who would make the finals with Block. But his attempt to get Block out of race became public and it has hurt him. That leaves retired Sheriff's Chief Bill Baker, with 35-years in the department. He's underfunded compared to Block and Baca, but he got a very nice editorial endorsement from the *L.A. Times*. In a down-ballot race like this one, that endorsement has to count for something...

◆ **Orange Co. Sheriff's Race** - In this open seat battle to replace Brad Gates (who remains neutral), it's money vs. grassroots support. O.C. Marshal Mike Carona is the candidate with the big bucks, while Santa Ana PD Chief Paul Walters is the candidate who is backed by the Assn. of O.C. Deputy Sheriffs. And unlike past elections, the deputies have walked some 500 precincts for Walters. In addition, the AOCDS has bankrolled some direct mail for Walters, which will be helpful. A TRO to block the association's IE/mail for Walters was lifted by an appeals court. The O.C. edition of the *L.A. Times* has endorsed Walters. This race will be a close, with no runoff. Stay tuned...

CALPEEK'S INFOBAHN: POLITICAL SHORT TAKES.

Editor's note: Here are a few political items worth noting...

■ **War With Vegas** - The Calif. SOS's office has certified the Tribal Gaming Initiative for the Nov. 3rd ballot. Sponsors turned in 1,008,129 raw petition signatures --- more than enough to make the random sample verification. FYI: In a related development, the CA State Senate on a 21-10 vote May 27th approved the Calif./Pala Indian Gaming compact...

■ **9th SD Special Election** - Assemblywoman Dion Aroner and Alameda Co. Sup. Keith Carson will have company from Assemblyman Don Perata in the Sept. 1st special election to fill out former Sen. Barbara Lee's term. Perata just got into the race a few days ago. The runoff will be held Nov. 3rd...

SOME INFO YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT CALPEEK.

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